

THE Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

BRIEFS

INSANITY OF GOD
VIEWINGS SLATED

NASHVILLE (BP) — The response to simulcasts of The Insanity of God last year has prompted encore showings on March 22 and 26. The feature documentary tells the story of missionaries Nik and Ruth Ripken, who traveled to 72 countries into the depths of the persecuted church. The film, based on a best-selling book of the same name released by LifeWay's B&H Publishing Group, was produced by the International Mission Board and Cooke Pictures and distributed by LifeWay Films. Churches and individuals can register for the simulcasts at LifeWay.com/InsanityofGod.

RONNIE FLOYD SETS PODCASTING DEBUT

SPRINGDALE, Ark. (BF) — Ronnie Floyd, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has launched a weekly podcast titled, *Ronnie Floyd on Life and Leadership Today*, available for subscription at iTunes. Floyd has been senior pastor of multi-campus Cross Church in northwest Arkansas since 1986. He noted one feature of the podcast will be lessons from leaders he has met, including those in ministry, politics, sports, business, and economics. In the March 7 podcast, Floyd spoke with ESPN senior NFL analyst Chris Mortenson about his fight with Stage IV throat cancer.

IMB TECH DEPT. REORGANIZING

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The reorganization of the Technology Solutions Department at the International Mission Board (IMB) in Richmond, Va., will achieve a higher level of services and enhance security for Southern Baptist international missionaries, IMB leadership announced. The decision was driven, by a shift to the cloud (off-site data storage) and other industry-wide technology changes, which will allow users to accomplish more with fewer resources. The reorganization will reduce employees from 65 people to 42, and is expected to take 18-20 months.

African American leader seeks SBC reconciliation

LAUREL, Md. (BP and local reports) — The leader of a network of some 4,000 predominantly African American churches in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has issued an open letter urging reconciliation between Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) President Russell Moore and those threatening to withhold Cooperative Program (CP) money over some of his stances.

Byron Day, pastor of Emmanuel Church in Laurel, Md., and president of the National African American Fellowship of the SBC, wrote in a March 9 letter that while "feathers have been ruffled on both sides... obedience to the Bible's teaching can surely offer a solution so that we can get back to working together to share the good news of God's love, forgiveness, and gift of eternal life."



MOORE

worthy of discipline or firing."

Day's letter came less than a month after the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville launched a formal study regarding the issue of churches escrowing CP money over Moore's actions, and two months

**GRAHAM**

"Now is not the time for division but unity, and we must be diligent to preserve the unity we have in Christ. Perhaps we should all take a step back and consider what would most honor Christ. The name of Jesus is too valuable and the preaching of the Gospel to the world too important to do otherwise."

Byron Day

**pastor of
Emmanuel
Church in
Laurel, Md., and
president of the
National African
American
Fellowship
of the SBC**

after Dallas-area Prestonwood Church's senior pastor, former SBC President Jack Graham, announced the church will eschew CP funds over "various significant positions taken by the leadership of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission."

The Executive Committee has received reports of similar actions by other churches.

One complaint cited by Graham is alleged "disrespectfulness" by Moore toward evangelical supporters of Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Graham is connected to Trump through his service on the President's 25-member Religious Advisory Panel. In an October 2016 blog entry on stream.org, Graham explained the panel's responsibility as, "to offer prayer, spiritual support, and pastoral counsel to Mr. Trump and his team."



MCKISSIC

Dwight McKissic, African American pastor of Cornerstone Church in Arlington, Texas, who has served as trustee for Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, in a March 6 blog on sbvoices.com warned of the possible consequences of taking action against Moore.

"The outcome of this investigation will speak volumes to Black Southern Baptist Convention Churches as to whether or not any church leader or entity head who publically, critically



Photo by Art Berry/
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Christians hit hard in Sinai area of Egypt

ISTANBUL, Turkey (BP and local reports) — Hundreds of Christians continue to flood out of the Egyptian town of Al-Arish in northern Sinai after the third Coptic Christian in a week was gunned down, reportedly by Islamic State-linked militants.

The mass exodus comes after the Coptic Christians were killed in what appears to be the work of militants making good on Islamic State (IS) threats issued in a Feb. 19 video to rid the country of "idolaters."

see EGYPT on p. 9

see SBC on p. 9

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Should we just give in?

A lot of non-Baptists (and Baptists, for that matter) think that our long-standing opposition to the recreational use of alcohol in any form is rather quaint. It is not amusing. We've all heard the tired old jokes about Baptists staggering to the polls to vote dry — and yes, there are Baptists who imbibe. No argument there.

The conduct of individual Baptists notwithstanding, we have always stood together against the bloody stain of alcohol that continues to be smeared across our state and nation. Virtually every family in Mississippi has been negatively affected in some way by misuse of this dangerous drug. It is powerfully addictive, cheap, and available almost anywhere just for the taking. Even with the legal controls, alcohol is also much too easy for teenagers to acquire in large and potent quantities.

Rarely does a day go by that someone in our state is not killed or permanently maimed by a drunk driver. The Mississippi State Penitentiary is filled with people who are there because they were raised in dysfunctional families controlled by alcohol's cruel hand. Corporate alcohol pushers spend billions in expensive advertising and promotions to get us to consume even more of their poison, all the while escaping the consequences of their actions through slick public relations and deep political connections.

Yet our culture doesn't take us seriously when we argue against alcohol use, even when we quote the grim statistics, even when authoritative evidence proves we are on the side of right and continue to stack up.

For example, a conclusive study four years ago headed by Timothy Naimi, who holds both doctor of medicine and master of public health degrees and is a professor in the Department of Medicine at Boston University School of Medicine, clearly spelled out the health dangers of even moderate use of alcohol — otherwise known as recreational drinking.

According to a summary authored by Boston internist Jeff Jenks on the medical school's website, Naimi and colleagues from the National Cancer Institute, the Alcohol Research Group, Public Health Institute, and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, examined recent data from the U.S. on alcohol consumption and cancer mortality.

They found that alcohol resulted in approximately 20,000 cancer deaths annually, which accounts for about 3.5% of all cancer deaths in the U.S. That's in addition to all the other alcoholic mayhem that ends in death, such as other medical problems not associated with cancer, automobile accidents, injuries from operating dangerous machinery, and drinking uncontrollable binge while drunk.

Their findings, published in the April 2013 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*, lead them to conclude that bringing down alcohol consumption in the U.S. should be an important cancer prevention strategy since alcohol is known to cause the disease even when used in small amounts.

How small an amount? The study points out that while higher levels of alcohol consumption naturally lead to a greater cancer risk, average consumption of 1.5 drinks per day or less totaled 30% of all cancer deaths attributed to alcohol.

The relationship between alcohol and cancer is strong, but is not widely appreciated by the public and remains underemphasized even by physicians," said Naimi in the Jenks report. "Alcohol is a big preventable cancer risk factor that has been hiding in plain sight."

Mississippi specifically and America in general are awash with people who have been crippled psychologically, socially, physically, and spiritually by alcohol. We already knew the use and abuse of this drug in any form was grave, and now we can add another killer to the long list of problems created by alcohol.

When it comes to alcohol consumption, it looks like we're right after all. Don't give up the fight.

The cooperation battleground

More than 30 years removed from the Conservative Resurgence, we now find ourselves at another significant battleground — cooperation. If we fail to cooperate through our stewardship of the Cooperative Program, we will cease to exist.

The nature of this recent conflict reveals that we as Southern Baptists do not understand nor appreciate the purpose of the Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M) 2000. What benefit is the document if we hold others to a more rigid standard of what it is to be a Baptist? In short, there is none. The document has then become merely a formality, functioning simply as white noise in the background to be drowned out or muted altogether.

Yet this document of faith allows theological room in the Southern Baptist Convention for the Calvinist and non-Calvinist, and the Trump supporter and non-Trump supporter alike. As Southern Baptists, we believe:

■ The Bible to be divinely inspired (BF&M 2000, Article I).

■ God is the one and only God, and is triune — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (BF&M 2000, Article II).

■ Jesus is the incarnate Son of God (BF&M 2000, Article II-B).

■ Man is made in the image of God, the "crowning work of His creation" (BF&M, Article III) and that all human life is sacred (BF&M, Article XVIII).

■ Man "transgressed the command of God" (BF&M 2000, Article III) and is in need of salvation "offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord" (BF&M 2000, Article IV).

■ "There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord" (BF&M 2000, Article IV).

These statements speak nothing to our commitment to Calvin or our opposition of him, nothing of any commitment to a political party or political personality. This is because those matters are not the basis of our cooperation.



Guest opinion

with Joshua Crutchfield

Our participation in the Cooperative Program is not out of support for any individual but for one purpose — that the Gospel would go forth to every tribe, people, and nation. We cooperate with one another in order to carry forward "the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom" (BF&M 2000, Article XIV).

If we begin to malign and alienate those whose views and opinions fit within Southern Baptists' statement of faith but not with our own views and opinions, we will see the death of the Southern Baptist Convention on this battleground of cooperation.

I am a millennial pastor under the age of 35. I affirm the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, and I affirm the missionary effort of Southern Baptists. I am thankful for a convention that allows room for theological disagreement while also providing the basis of our cooperation. I believe it is the greatest and most effective way to reach our country and our world.

Our cooperation is not based on the BF&M 2000 alone, but on the One of whom the document speaks — Jesus. Thus I choose to stand with cooperation, to lead the church I pastor to give through the same channel of giving that has allowed us the wonderful privilege of partnering with so many others in efforts to see the Gospel advance, the name of Christ declared, and the glory of God made known.

Crutchfield is pastor of First Church in Madisonville, Texas. His commentary appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style, clarity, and length.

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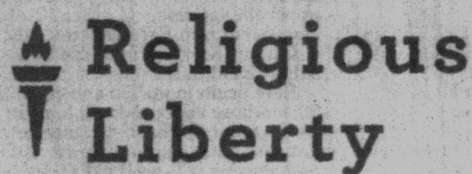
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Religious liberty subject of six-week study



HOW THE GOSPEL SHAPES
OUR FIRST FREEDOM



PHILLIP BETHANCOURT & ANDREW T. WALKER
WITH RUSSELL MOORE



NASHVILLE (BP) — Two Nashville-based Southern Baptist entities have combined efforts to produce a small group study on religious liberty at a time when many people feel the fundamental freedom appears to be both threatened and misunderstood in the United States.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and LifeWay Christian Resources announced the release on March 7 of the study titled, *Religious Liberty: How the Gospel Shapes Our First Freedom*. The six-week study is available for purchase through LifeWay.

The free exercise of religion guaranteed in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is under attack for some Christians and other religious adherents, especially those who object to using their services for same sex weddings or to performing abortions or other medical procedures that violate their consciences.

In addition, some in the church seem uncertain whether religious freedom should extend to people of all faiths.

The curriculum's goal is to "equip churches to see religious liberty as it is — grounded in the Gospel," ERLC President Russell Moore said in a written release. "In an age when religious liberty is increasingly imperiled we all need to be reminded that religious liberty isn't a partisan political idea. It's a fundamen-

tal part of being made in the image of God, and being created with a conscience that is answerable ultimately to Christ, not Caesar."

He prays the study "will help believers and churches dismantle myths and misconceptions and help the body of Christ be faithful in its witness in the years ahead," Moore said, adding he is thankful for the partnership with LifeWay and those who contributed to the study.

Michael Kelley, director of LifeWay's Groups Ministry, noted "most of us have never experienced life without religious liberty. It's one of the great blessings we enjoy, but also one of the blessings we might take for granted."

"We are hopeful that this study will be a great resource to help many better understand and appreciate this first freedom."

Each of the six lessons consists of a 60-minute group session plus individual study, journaling, and an article by a religious liberty expert. Each group session includes 15 - 20 minutes of video featuring pastors, scholars, and other leaders commenting on religious freedom.

The six lessons are:

- Religious Liberty in Today's Culture.
- Religious Liberty and the Bible.

■ Religious Liberty and Mission.

■ Religious Liberty and the Common Good.

■ Religious Liberty in the Public Square.

■ Religious Liberty and Common Objections.

The curriculum's primary authors are Phillip Bethancourt, ERLC executive vice president, and Andrew Walker, the ERLC's director of policy studies.

Walker told BP the ERLC-LifeWay curriculum is the first to his knowledge to be "dedicated explicitly to religious liberty."

"Considering that religious liberty faces challenging headwinds like never before, it is urgent that Christians understand the relevance and necessity of religious liberty, not only for themselves, but how its biblical foundations lay the groundwork for a society that fosters respect and liberty amid great diversity," Walker said in written comments.

"Understood from a biblical perspective, religious liberty is a vital component for the advance of the Gospel," he said. "Consciences must be free to respond to Christ, and free societies ensure that persuasion — not coercion — can occur."

Materials for the study may be ordered at lifeway.com/n/product-family/religious-liberty?cid=RDR-religiousliberty.

Religious expression bill on way to Ky. governor's desk

FRANKFORT, Ky. (BP and local reports) — Students would be able to express religious and political viewpoints in public schools and on college campuses without interference from administrators under a bill that cleared its final legislature hurdle March 6 and is headed to Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin to be signed into law.

State Sen. Albert Robinson, R-London, said he decided to sponsor Senate Bill 17 after a Johnson County elementary school removed biblical references from a presentation of Charlie Brown's Christmas Carol in 2015.

Robinson is of the Pentecostal faith. Bevin attends an independent Christian megachurch in Louisville.

The bill, which basically affirms rights that are already in place, was adopted on an 81-8 vote. Robinson said he felt the legislation "was necessary to make clear to educators that

"Making sure that an understanding of the liberties, which we hold sacred, is confirmed from time to time, is also appropriate."

Kentucky state Rep. Tim Moore

R-Elizabethtown

biblical references are in no way forbidden from campuses.

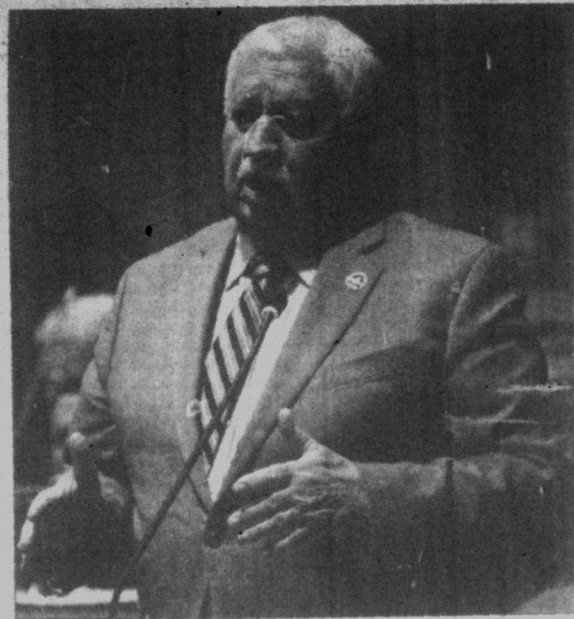
Kentucky state Rep. Tim Moore, R-Elizabethtown, said the constitutional guarantee to freedom of religion has been imposed upon by educators who either were confused about what is allowed or who willingly defied those constitutional rights.

"Making sure that an understanding of the liberties, which we hold sacred, is confirmed from time to time, is also appropriate," Moore said.

Some critics argued that the legislation could be found unconstitutional and cost the state a hefty legal bill. Supporters said it would be a weapon in the war being waged against Christianity.

Kentucky state Rep. Joni Jenkins, D-Louisville, said lawmakers should not be trying to push religion onto campuses. "I believe religion should be expressed in church or in the privacy of my home, not in public schools," she said.

In March 2013, Republican Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant signed Senate Bill 2633, the Mississippi Student Religious Liberties Act of 2013. The measure protects students from being discriminated against in a public school for expressing their religious viewpoints or engaging in religious activities. The principal legislative author is recorded as state Sen. Chris McDaniel, R-Ellisville.



SUCCESS — Kentucky state Sen. Albert Robinson, R-London, delivers a floor speech in favor of his religious expression bill that ultimately won final passage in the Kentucky Legislature and is on its way to Republican Gov. Matt Bevin to be signed into law (BP photo courtesy of LRC).

I was at an Upward basketball game last Saturday morning to watch my youngest grandson play. At six years old, he and most of his buddies have as the most significant goal in the game to dribble the ball, and equal to that is the passion they have to guard the guy on the other team who has on the same wristband they do. Above all those things, the ultimate goal is to have fun and I must tell you they do.

The goals are achieved week after week and while the score may end up something like two to nothing, they have a blast playing the game. On this particular day, the game got a little draggy. As they came down the court to try to make another shot, the person guarding my grandson was doing so energetically and intensely. He was doing a great job. His arms were raised and he was flailing about making sure my grandson didn't get the ball and if he did he wouldn't be able to do anything with it.

There he stood before my grand boy with his arms raised and looking him in the eye. There were ten men on the court, but of course I was watching the one — my grandson. All of a sudden, he reached out with both hands and started to tickle the guy who was guarding him. You get the picture. He had both his arms raised and his hands were waving around and so my grandson just decided to tickle him, and it worked. The boy jerked both arms down and these two six year olds were standing there face to face, both of them giggling. The Tickle Attack in basketball was invented that Saturday morning.



The Tickle Attack

Now, technically that's a foul but they only had one referee trying to keep up with ten guys on the court and all the parents and grandparents screaming in the background. He really didn't notice the attack or the impact of the attack, but I can tell you the guy wasn't guarding my grandson as closely or as ferociously as he was before.

I do not believe that the Tickle Attack will become a part of high school, college, or NBA basketball, but it has possibilities. Well, at the least it has possibilities in the church world and we need to pay attention to what the Scripture says about joy being in our midst. There are very few people who cannot quote Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." Many are familiar with Jesus'

instructions in John 15:11, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Overflowing joy is available to us. In the good times, absolutely. In the bad times, it still flows in our hearts. Regardless of what's going on in your life, God has provided for us to have joy in the midst of it. I'm not talking about just silliness; I'm talking about confident joy that God is still in control and He still loves us.

You see, there is a joy that transcends all the miseries of life. It is an eternal joy. It is a God-given joy that the world cannot rob from us. So much of the joy for which we reach, and fail to receive, is based on stuff and acquiring more of it. Things and activities and doing more of them, all of which come

to naught except we get and we may go and in the process just be worn out. The Tickle Attack in church is a moment when God brings sweet peace and inspiration even when it seems impossible to have attained it. There is a joy that not only transcends the things of this world; it is somewhat transformable as when my grandson reached out and tickled the guy last Saturday morning.

We may come in contact with the intense grumpiness of this world and are able to present gladness, gently and caringly just to interject a touch of care and reality to a world that may have worn everybody down.

Back to that moment at the basketball game, things changed. Nobody was playing better basketball, but everything they were doing they did with a better spirit.

Joy is that way. The peace of God, the plan of God, the purpose of God, and having us here walking through whether it is the deep, dark valleys of life or climbing up the sunlit side of a mountain, the Lord comes and reminds us that wherever we are, He is and whatever we need, He is able to supply. So today when it seems things are a little draggy — a little down — look for the Lord to bring the Tickle Attack in your own life as He mentions the good things, the long lasting grace things that He's put in our lives. Even as you're facing a crisis and the challenges of life, let Him come and lift your spirit and rejoice.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Easter is coming, so start planning now

By Anthony L. Jordan
Correspondent

There are two Sundays each year that provide the greatest opportunity to engage family, friends and people, in general, for invitations to church. Those two Sundays are Easter and Christmas.

JORDAN

Even those who are irreligious are more open to attend church on these two Sundays so, you may ask, "Why are you telling us this several weeks before Easter?" Because I want to challenge you to develop a list of three lost people whom you can invite to Easter services on April 16. Your list may include a son-in-law, a sister, parents of your child's friend, or the checker at the grocery store.

The point is that you identify three people whom you know by name or with whom you can identify through regular contact.

Begin now praying for them daily with the idea that

you will extend an invitation for them to join you for Easter worship. When you pray for them, do so using the Word of God. For example, pray 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

Pray that God would do a work in each of their lives that would bring them to repentance.

Pray John 16:8-11, "And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

Ask the Lord to send the Holy Spirit to bring strong and powerful conviction in their lives so that when they hear the Easter message they would come under deep conviction and respond to the Gospel.

Pray also that they will be willing to attend Easter services with you. Be alert to opportunities that God may well

provide for you to speak the Gospel into their lives even before Easter. As you know, praying for lost people means God is preparing and using you as a witness to speak into their lives.

I have discovered that often He will open the door along the way to drop a brief witness or, on many occasions, He provides a wide-open door through circumstances to speak the Gospel to someone for whom I am praying.

One of the ways to extend the invitation to those for whom you are praying to join you for Easter services is to also invite them to your home for Easter lunch. Sadly, many of us have lost the art of Christian hospitality. We often look to biblical times and think that to sit down at a meal with someone indicates a willingness to come close. This is the reason the Pharisees criticized Jesus so many times.

Remember, they said of Jesus that he "ate with sinners." He did so because it showed He cared and wanted to know them beyond a passing "hello." He wanted the opportunity to share the most significant truths with them in a natural and easy setting.

Invite some or all of the people for whom you are praying to join your family for Easter lunch. This invitation will provide opportunity for people to be in a Christian environment and see your family from inside your home. I assure you there will be many natural points of connection that will occur when you can share the Gospel with your family or friends. If nothing else, just talk about the sermon over lunch.

Be ready to carry on the relationship and continue to share the Gospel. Yes, there are those wonderful times when you present the Gospel to someone, or they hear the Gospel in a worship service, and they want to respond immediately — but as our culture moves further away from a Christian worldview, it often takes several times of Gospel conversation before lost people respond to the Gospel.

Speak truth, but keep the doors open. Always be respectful. Your job is not to convict or convert. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. Your job is to pray and share. Yes, it's several weeks before Easter but seed planting and cultivation precede the harvest. Now is the time to

begin praying for those three people. Do you have them in mind? If not, your first prayer is to ask the Father to place those three people on your heart this week. Then, get on your knees and start the process.

I leave with a word to pastors. Pastors, you lead the way and set the example. Begin now challenging your people. Affirm to your people that you will preach the Cross and Resurrection on Easter Sunday, and you will make clear the way to salvation through Christ. Start now telling your people you will be prayed up, filled up, powered up, and overflowing with the joy of the Gospel.

Praying, inviting, sharing, and proclaiming the Gospel will make Easter a day of celebrating the Cross and Resurrection, but also a day of salvation for many.

Jordan is executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City. This column first appeared in the Baptist Messenger (baptistmessenger.com), the convention's news journal, and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style.

NRB surveys attacks on religious liberty

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP and local reports) — Three clients of Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) described their battles for religious liberty March 2 at National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) convention, Proclaim 17, in Orlando.

A wedding cinematographer, a preschool director, and a former fire chief described their legal battles in a public policy session sponsored by ADF at the Orlando World Center Marriott. Their cases and others likely will determine the future of religious freedom in America, ADF Senior Counsel Erik Stanley told the audience.

"I firmly believe that within the next decade or so, how Christians are going to be treated in employment, in the public square, in churches [is] going to be decided in court cases, in the halls of Congress, in [presidential] administrations," Stanley said.

Christians must return to the understanding that religious liberty is an "unalienable right" that "should not turn on the whim of who is in office," he pointed out.

Joining Stanley in the discussion were:

■ Carl Larsen, co-owner with his wife Angel of Telescope Media Group. The Larsens have filed a pre-enforcement challenge to a Minnesota law that would require them to make films of same sex marriages if they create movies of weddings between a man and a woman. They could face up to \$25,000 in fines and 90 days in jail per violation.

■ Annette Kiehne, director of the Trinity Lutheran Child Learning Center in Columbia, Mo. The state rejected Trinity Lutheran's application to be part of a program using recycled tires to provide safer, rubberized surfaces for children's playgrounds because, according to the state, including the center in the program would violate a Missouri law barring government funding of religion.

Stanley will argue the case before the U.S. Supreme Court on April 19.

■ Kelvin Cochran, who was fired

as Atlanta's fire chief for advocating the biblical view of marriage and sexuality in a men's devotional book he wrote. The legal challenge to his removal is being prepared.

The Larsens

Carl Larsen told NRB participants that his company "exists to glorify God through top quality media production." Because marriage is a central theme in the Larsens' lives, he said, "[W]e're excited to tell stories about the glory of God in marriage."

At the core of their refusal to video non-biblical marriages "is a conviction that nobody should be forced to work or speak or say anything that's a violation of their deeply-held beliefs," Larsen said.

Kiehne

Children in the neighborhood use Trinity Lutheran's playground outside school hours, Kiehne said. "It feels like a double standard, and we would just like the Supreme Court to do away with the double standard and rule in our favor" so children "can be just as safe on our playground as they could on any other neutral playground," she said.

Trinity Lutheran's challenge is a "sleeping case, but this kind of case will set the principles for the free exercise of religion moving forward for the next few decades," Stanley said.

Cochran

Atlanta officials fired Cochran even though an investigation showed he had not discriminated against employees based on his beliefs. When he experienced discrimination as a black firefighter in Shreveport, La., Cochran said he determined not to discriminate as a leader but to establish "a culture of compassion and equity and justice."

His prayer is "that God would be glorified at the end of this legal process," Cochran told the audience.



ELECTRONIC EVANGELIZING — Calvin McFarland (left) and pastor Mark Helton review analytics that show how many people are listening to sermons from First Church in Monticello, Ky. The church has adopted several relatively inexpensive social media platforms as means to spread the Gospel around the world. (BP photo courtesy of Kentucky Today)

Social media working for a small-town Ky. church

MONTICELLO, Ky. (BP)

— More than 5,000 people watched and listened to small-town pastor Mark Helton's sermons on smartphones, tablets, and computer monitors over the past month.

First Church in Monticello, Ky., has embraced the relatively inexpensive technology that has allowed congregations of all sizes to vastly increase their reaches. On the typical Sunday morning, Helton preaches to about 200 familiar faces gathered in the pews while analytics show that lots of others from his community and beyond tune in remotely.

"It has been an eye-opener for me," Helton said. "Technology provides incredible opportunities for sharing the Gospel."

The Pew Research Center reported last month that nearly nine out of 10 Americans are online, a fact that isn't lost on Helton's media crew led by Calvin McFarland, a mail carrier whose professional training was in chemical warfare during his years in the military.

"I don't have a background in technology. It's just something I picked up," McFarland said.

"I call it a spiritual gift," Helton joked.

Larry Brannin, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's media production specialist, said he is excited to see more congregations taking the Gospel into cyberspace where so many people have an opportunity to hear about Jesus.

Brannin said churches that haven't yet taken the step should consider doing so. "On a weekly basis, some of our churches are reaching thousands of people who may not otherwise hear a Gospel message, and they're finding it's really not that expensive to venture into livestreaming."

"All they need are a camera, a computer with streaming software or hardware, and relatively good Internet service. Armed with very modest equipment, they can literally reach the world."

McFarland quickly adopted Facebook Live, which allows him to stream Helton's sermons in real time on the world's most popular social media platform. McFarland also puts the sermons on Box-Cast and makes them available on the church website.

From his small southern Kentucky town, McFarland is helping First Church of Monticello to reach the nations. He is continually looking for new strategies to expand the

church's reach through online initiatives.

By all measures, the Internet has become a crucial tool for churches to use. A Pew Research Center survey released last month found that 77% of Americans now own smartphones that give instant access to the Internet. That includes a growing number of lower-income Americans and senior citizens.

Among younger adults, nearly everyone has a smartphone. Pew reported that 92% of 18- to 29-year-olds own one and 74% of Americans ages 50-64 now own smartphones. That's up 16 percentage points in just two years.

As far back as 2011, LifeWay Research was reporting a trend among churches that were increasingly turning to social networking to expand their reaches. A survey of 1,003 Protestant congregations that year found 60% of the churches surveyed used some form of social media either to improve communications among their own members or to reach people with no connections to their congregations.

Brannin said anecdotal evidence suggests that number has grown exponentially over the years.



FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM — Annette Kiehne (second from right), director of the Trinity Lutheran Child Learning Center in Columbia, Mo., speaks March 2 at Proclaim 17 in Orlando about her center's religious freedom case. Joining Kiehne at the National Religious Broadcasters annual convention were attorney Erik Stanley (left) with Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) and two other ADF clients: Carl Larsen (second from left) of Telescope Media Group and former Atlanta fire chief Kelvin Cochran. (BP photo)

Just for the Record



CONCORD CHURCH, DRY CREEK, presented William Livingston with the Gerald Mauney Scholarship. Shown are Mr. Livingston, Livingston, Juanita Mauney, T.C. Mauney, Keith Mauney, and pastor Robert Walker.



The youth from **LITTLE BAHALA CHURCH, WESSON**, served as volunteers for a food ministry at the Toby Mac concert in Jackson. Shown are the youth and youth leaders Sha Coghlan and Bertha Williams.

In other Church News:

➤ **New Hope Church, Walnut Grove**, invites all to their last service in their original sanctuary Mar. 19, 11 a.m., prior to moving to their new sanctuary.

➤ **The Calhoun Association** is hosting a Tell Someone Rally on the square in Bruce March 20, 10 a.m. Jim Futral, speaker.

➤ **Clear Creek Church, Lamar**, is hosting Debra Perry and Jaikyn's Call in concert Mar. 18, 7 p.m.

➤ **Spangle Banner Church, Cleveland**, is hosting a Help Me Tell Someone Conference Mar. 17-18. Friday, registration, 6 p.m.; Saturday, call to worship, 9 a.m. Ken Weatherse, special guest; Freddie Henson Jr., New Hope Church, Hudson, Fla.; Steve Stone, Ken Rhodes, Tim Ruth, and William Perkins, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; Hawk Lee, North Delta Association; Tommy Williams, Mid-Delta Association.



The RA's and GA's of **TUCKERS CROSSING CHURCH, LAUREL**, honored their senior adults on Children's Ministry Day Feb. 18, with a luncheon at the church. Earlier, they had collected Kool-Aid for a local community ministry. Marshall & Karen Fitzgerald, leaders; Eddie Bryant, pastor.



The children of **EUCLATUBBA CHURCH, SALTILLO**, visited with the residents of the Baldwyn Nursing Home Feb. 18.

2017 MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST EVANGELIST DIRECTORY



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BIBL i O C I P H E R

SIWYWLBYW CNDU ZMSB UBZ, PIDS
SICMHN NBWOWY UW GWNCYW,
PIWM UW EYDU, AWVCWOW SIDS UW
YWKWCOW SIWX, DMG UW NIDVV
IDOW SIWX.
XDYJ WYWOWM: SPWMSU-LBZY

Clue: P = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: James 2:5

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

MS POSITIONS

TRINITY CHURCH, FULTON MS WILL BE ACCEPTING RESUMES THROUGH MARCH 31 FOR THE PART-TIME POSITION OF YOUTH DIRECTOR. Please send all resumes to trinitychurch@outlook.com.

EASTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH, PELAHATCHIE, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please prayerfully submit resumes to 207 Warren Ave. Pelahatchie, Ms 39145.

SYLVARENA BAPTIST CHURCH, RALEIGH, MS IS IN SEARCH OF PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Please send resume to Sylvarena Baptist Church, 41 SCR 18-15 Raleigh, MS 39153.

SOUTHWAY BAPTIST CHURCH IN BROOKHAVEN, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR MINISTER OF YOUTH. Please email resumes to southwaybaptist@yahoo.com

CENTER HILL BAPTIST CHURCH IN HAMILTON, MS IS LOOKING FOR A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH. Please send resume to Youth Minister Search Committee at P.O. Box 59, Hamilton, MS 39746 or you may email to pastorfermye@yahoo.com

WALTHAM BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF STUDENTS AND CHILDREN. Please email resumes to WalthamBaptist@gmail.com or mail to Waltham Baptist Church, P.O. Box 366, Waltham, MS 39771.

SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR - BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH LOCATED AT MERIDIAN, MS IN THE WHYNOT COMMUNITY OF SOUTHERN LAUDERDALE COUNTY. Please email resume to office@whynotbethany.org or mail to Bethany Baptist Church 4475 Ponds Road Meridian, MS 39301.

CLASSIFIEDS

BEECH RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IS SEEKING AN ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONARY who will assist 42 churches, located in 3 West Tennessee counties, to partner together in order to impact the world for Christ. Email resumes to richard.reb@gmail.com or send them to: Associational Missionary Search Committee, P.O. Box 498, Lexington, TN 38351. Resumes will be received until April 30, 2017.

BI-VOCATIONAL WORSHIP PASTOR: Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Moulton, AL is receiving resumes for a part-time bi-vocational worship pastor. Resumes and inquiries may be sent to pjycesouthside@aol.com

GATLINBURG RENTAL: Cabin \$95/night. Contact 832-922-0401 or Email: pdw4760@att.net for information and booking.

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PULPIT SUPPLY AVAILABLE: Retired Southern Baptist Navy chaplain available for Sunday pulpit supply on short notice (pastor illness, vacation, rest, etc.) 100 mile radius of Hattiesburg. Member of Hardy Street Baptist Church. Graduate of New Orleans Baptist and Fuller Theological Seminaries. References available. Compensation unimportant. Contact him at 601-408-4808 or bennyhornsby.com

Just for the Record



GRIFFITH MEMORIAL CHURCH, JACKSON, ordained Steve McWhorter and Doug Bradshaw as deacons Feb. 19. Shown are McWhorter, pastor Andy Fullington, and Bradshaw.



The children of VICTORY CHURCH, JEFF DAVIS COUNTY, recently presented a program on the disciples of Jesus.

MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH



Presents
Mark Lowry and The Martins
7:00 PM Friday, April 7, 2017

\$15.00
(Tickets available in the church office and website)

Discount for groups of 20 or more.

Contact the church office for more information.

Doors open at 6:30 PM

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Phone - 601-296-8000

www.mainstreetbaptistchurch.org



College News

► BestColleges.com has ranked Mississippi College as number one among the state's four-year schools. The report evaluated MC's costs, academic strengths, retention rates and other indicators to reach its conclusion in late February.

PLEASE PRAY AND CONSIDER ATTENDING ONE OF THESE TELL ME RALLIES!

DATE	TIME	COUNTY/CITY	LOCATION
Mar. 20	10 a.m.	Calhoun / Bruce	Bruce City Square
Mar. 20	noon	Webster / Waltham	Waltham Baptist Church
Mar. 21	9 a.m.	Lamar / West Hattiesburg	LBA Complex Assoc. parking lot
Mar. 21	11 p.m.	Forrest / Hattiesburg	Lighthouse Rescue Mission
Mar. 21	1 p.m.	Perry / New Augusta	Perry County Courthouse
Mar. 21	4 p.m.	Pearl River / Picayune	First Baptist Church parking lot
Mar. 23	9 a.m.	Jefferson Davis / Prentiss	Jefferson Davis County Courthouse
Mar. 23	11 a.m.	Covington / Collins	Covington County Courthouse
Mar. 23	7 p.m.	Jones / Laurel	West Laurel Baptist Church
Mar. 27	9 a.m.	Tate / Senatobia	Looxahoma Baptist Church
Mar. 27	11 a.m.	DeSoto / Southaven	First Baptist Church
Mar. 27	2 p.m.	Marshall / Holly Springs	Marshall County Courthouse Lawn
Mar. 27	4 p.m.	Lafayette / Oxford	Lafayette County Courthouse Lawn
Mar. 28	9 a.m.	Pontotoc / Pontotoc	Pontotoc Town Square (Court Square)
Mar. 28	11 a.m.	Lee / Tupelo	Ballard Park - East Pavilion
Mar. 28	2 p.m.	Itawamba / Fulton	Park Beside Fulton Courthouse
Mar. 28	4 p.m.	Monroe / Amory	Frisco Park
Mar. 30	9 a.m.	Wilkinson / Woodville	Woodville Baptist Church
Mar. 30	11 a.m.	Amite / Liberty	MS Baptist Association Office
Mar. 30	4 p.m.	Adams / Natchez	First Baptist Church front Lawn

VISIT WWW.MBCB.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Unseen Spurgeon sermon material to be published

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — B&H Academic has launched the first of a 12-volume series of previously unpublished sermons by the famed British preacher Charles H. Spurgeon.

The series, titled *The Lost Sermons of C.H. Spurgeon*, is being researched and edited by Christian T. George, assistant professor of historical theology and curator of the Spurgeon Library at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

The first volume includes a series introduction, an overview of Spurgeon's life and times, 78 sermons he preached itinerantly and in his first pastorate at Waterbeach Chapel, and George's analysis of the sermons.

Each volume within the compilation will include full-color facsimiles, transcriptions, contextual and biographical introductions, and editorial annotations of sermons from Spurgeon's earliest years in the pulpit.

The *Lost Sermons of C.H. Spurgeon* adds approximately 10% more material to Spurgeon's complete body of literature, with the volumes being developed for scholars, pastors, and students alike, according to B&H Academic, a publishing division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

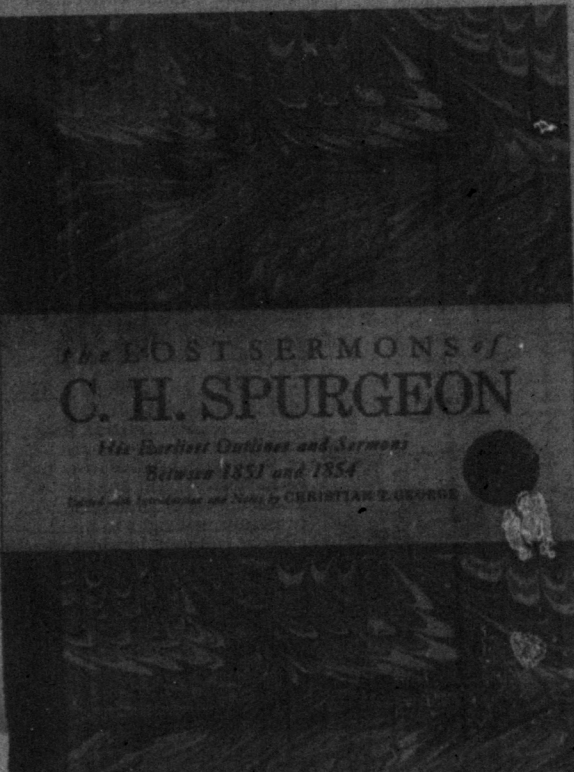
"It is a tremendous occasion to partner with B&H Academic and mark the launching of this vital series — *The Lost Sermons of C.H. Spurgeon*, which documents Spurgeon's earliest sermons — on the campus of Midwestern Seminary," President Jason Allen said.

"God has shown immeasurable favor upon our institution over the past five years, and one of the greatest blessings has been through sending Christian George to serve on our faculty and curate our Spurgeon Library."

"As one of the foremost Spurgeon scholars, Dr. George has worked tirelessly researching and writing this volume... I am certain that these efforts will pay enormous dividends in reaching the world for Christ."

Jim Baird, vice president of B&H Academic, noted that the launch of the initial volume provided an opportunity to further the imprint's relationship with Midwestern Seminary and offer a practical resource that encourages Christian believers everywhere.

"This project represents years of hard work by Dr. Christian George and the beginning of a fruitful partnership... Baird said. This partnership should serve to encourage and bless numerous church leaders and introduce new people to the



depth and breadth of Charles Spurgeon's ministry."

George described how, while researching for his doctor of philosophy degree at Spurgeon's College in London, he came across the original journals containing the sermons. He said he soon realized they were messages that Spurgeon had previously promised to have published for his readers but unfortunately, the demands of ministry prevented him from fulfilling his promise.

Thus, the sermons had been lost to history for some 160 years.

Upon realizing the value and scope of the documents, George said he came to an agreement with the college's principal and began to search for a publishing company. In due course, he said, that led him to B&H Academic, with the volumes being published "for such a time as this."

George said the aim of the series is to bring its readers into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ through the lens of Charles Spurgeon's ministry and messages.

"Ultimately, the heartbeat of this project is that its readers will not look to Spurgeon, but through Spurgeon, to find a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ," George said. "There

is a danger that we might worship Spurgeon, and we certainly don't want to do that. We want our sole focus of worship to be on Christ."

"However, we don't want to forget Spurgeon and his contributions to the Christian faith, either."

Volumes 2 and 3 are in various stages of the editing process and, according to B&H, the full 12-volume set will be completed by 2023.

Spurgeon, born in 1834, served as pastor of Metropolitan Tabernacle, a London megachurch, from 1854 until his death in 1892.

The Spurgeon Library at Midwestern Seminary was dedicated in October 2015 and includes Spurgeon's personal collection of more than 6,000 books along with hundreds of artifacts, letters, and assorted materials.

The seminary acquired the collection in 2006 from William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo.

Midwestern Seminary is also home to the Spurgeon Center for Biblical Preaching, which offers a limited number of scholarships to full-time residential students called to pastoral ministry and sponsors the Charles Spurgeon Lectures on Biblical Preaching each fall.

The Spurgeon Center is online at center.spurgeon.org.

OBITUARIES

William O. (Bill) Crews, 81, president emeritus of Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention in Ontario, Ca. (formerly Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Ca.), died March 1 in Vancouver, Wa., after a brief illness.

CREWS

Crews became the sixth president of Golden Gate Seminary in December 1986. He transitioned to the role of chancellor in 2003 and retired from the seminary in 2005. He subsequently was elected by the Northwest Baptist Convention in Vancouver, Wa., as executive director-treasurer in 2007, serving until his second retirement at the end of 2012. During the late 1970s, Crews served as the convention's director of communications and editor of the Northwest Baptist Witness newspaper. Crews was pastor of eight churches over a span of 32 years, including the 2,300-member Magnolia Avenue Church in Riverside, Ca., for eight years. The other churches are in Washington, Oregon, and Texas. He also served as president of the California Southern Baptist Convention and, earlier, the Northwest Baptist Convention. Crews held a doctor of ministry degree from Golden Gate Seminary; a bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth; and a bachelor of arts degree from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. He received Southwestern Seminary's distinguished alumni award in 1994. Crews is survived by his wife, the former Jo Ann Cunningham. He was preceded in death by a son, Ronald, and a daughter, Rhonda. Memorial services were March 9 at Gateway Seminary and March 10 at Pathway Church in Gresham, Or. (Source: Baptist Press)



dent, Johnson had been executive director/treasurer of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention for 11 years. Prior to leading Arizona Baptists, he served as a pastor nearly 25 years in nine churches in California and Oklahoma. He was elected president of the California Southern Baptist Convention in 1975. Johnson's accomplishments as RTVC president included the purchase of FamilyNet network; near-elimination of a \$10 million debt; and a focus on technology. Johnson held a Ph.D. from the California Graduate School of Theology in Garden Grove; an M.Div. from Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Ca. (now Gateway Seminary in Ontario, Ca.) and an undergraduate degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. He is survived by his wife and two children. (Source: Baptist Press)

Robert Parham, 63, who began a breakout ethics organization for Baptist moder-



PARHAM

ates during the Southern Baptist Convention's Conservative Resurgence, died March 5 in Nashville after battling amyloidosis. A former staffer at the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission (now the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission), Parham founded the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville in 1991. He was one of five children born to Bob and Jo Ann Parham, a missionary couple in Nigeria who were serving with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board). Parham held a Ph.D. in Christian ethics from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and served as a pastor in Cogo, Texas, in 1983-84. He also held an M.Div. from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and an undergraduate degree in international relations from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Upon finishing his Ph.D., Parham joined the staff of the Christian Life Commission in 1985 as director of hunger concerns, later serving as associate director from June 1988 until his 1991 resignation to lead the Baptist Center for Ethics. He is survived by his wife Betsy and their two children, Elisa and Chris. Funeral service was March 13 at First Church, Nashville. (Sources: Baptist Press and Religion News Service)

Jack B. Johnson, 82, the last president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television

Commission (RTVC) from 1990-97, died March 5 in Henderson, Nv. The broadcast ministry became part of the new North American Mission Board in 1997, in a restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention. Before his election as RTVC presi-



JOHNSON

EGYPT

cont. from p. 1

The latest slaying was the seventh killing of a Copt on the Sinai Peninsula in a month.

Coptic Christians, primarily Egyptian citizens, are recognized as descendants of first-century evangelization efforts in the region that continued until the Arab Muslim conquest in the year 639. Copts are estimated to comprise about 10% of Egypt's current population, which would put their numbers at approximately nine million people.

Reports differ on how the latest victim, Kamel Youssef, was killed but according to the Associated Press, militants stormed his Al-Arish home and shot him in front of his family. Two days earlier, the body of Saied Hakim, 65, was found late at night in Al-Arish behind a state-run language school where he was ambushed and killed by masked gunmen.

Medhat Saied, 45, Hakim's son, was abducted and burned alive. His body was found in the same place as his father's, according to local media reports.

No one has claimed responsibility for the three killings,

but the consensus is that Wilayat Sinai, the Sinai Province branch of IS previously known as Ansar Bait al-Maqdis, killed the men in a quest to terrorize Christians and push them out of the region.

Since Egypt's 2013 coup, the military-run government has been involved in counter-insurgency operations on the Sinai peninsula against members of both the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi groups now fighting under the banner of IS.

Military outposts in the Sinai have been the sites of repeated attacks by terrorist groups, and the Egyptian army has had little success making strategic counter attacks or effectively protecting members of the Coptic minority constantly under assault.

A total of six Copts have been killed in Al-Arish, a city of roughly 165,000 people, in less than a month. On Jan. 30, Wa'el Youssef, 35, was shot down at his small grocery store in downtown Al-Arish. The assailants reportedly shot Youssef in broad daylight in front of his wife and one of their two sons.

On Feb. 12, masked militants ambushed another Copt, Bahgat Zakher, 40, as he was

driving his car through the southern outskirts of Al-Arish. A group of armed jihadists stopped Zakher and shot him, killing him instantly, according to local media reports.

The third Copt to meet his death at the hands of suspected jihadists in Al-Arish was Adel Shawqy, 57, a day laborer, who was shot on Feb. 13.

On Feb. 16, masked men ambushed and shot Gamal Cirgis, 45, a Coptic schoolteacher and shoe shop owner, while he was tending his shop. The attack happened no more than 220 yards from a heavily defended army post.

The current exodus isn't the only time Copts have been forced to flee Al-Arish in recent history. In July 2013, Coptic villagers fled Al-Arish, Rafah, and Sheikh Zuwayed and after a priest, Mina Aboud Sharubim, was gunned down, and a Christian businessman, Magdy Lamei, was abducted and killed.

Based on reporting by Morning Star News, a California-based independent news service focusing on the persecution of Christians worldwide. Edited for style and clarity.

SBC

cont. from p. 1

evaluates President Donald Trump will be welcome in the Southern Baptist Convention and eligible to serve in any and all levels of denominational life...

"Why such huge implications for Blacks in the Southern Baptist Convention? It is because the vast majority of Black Southern Baptist Convention Church leaders and pastors and future potential entity heads are not Trump-leaning, blindly loyal Republican voters. The majority of Black Baptist Church leaders would agree with Moore's assessment of Trump, wholeheartedly.

"Therein lies the potential for the outcome of this investigation to be tremendously and racially polarizing."

Other Moore critics have voiced concern over a friend of the court brief signed by ERLC last year in support of a New Jersey Islamic society's constitutional right to build a mosque without burdensome special demands from local government. The society's lawsuit is currently before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Day told Baptist Press (BP) there seems to be "a predominance of opinion" among NAAF pastors that Southern Baptists should not take sides in the present discussions about Moore but "for the Gospel's sake, try to get together."

Day said the letter was prompted by "the flurry of news" about CP funds being escrowed by some churches, defenses of Moore, and the CP Committee's study. "All of that coupled together made me think: Why don't we just get this taken care of and not air it out in public[?]"

In the letter, Day wrote

that Moore "has been outstanding as president of the ERLC," addressing "the highly visible ethical issues of abortion and biblical marriage" as well as "social injustices such as racism which have been long overlooked."

Alluding to Scripture, Day wrote, "What would happen if those offended by Dr. Moore were to take a biblical approach and talk to him privately concerning comments that offended them, and then give him opportunity to apologize and be reconciled, to the glory of Christ? What would happen if Dr. Moore would receive their calls and agree to meet with them and experience reconciliation, to the glory of God?"

"What would happen if Dr. Moore, upon learning that his brother has something against him, would leave his offering at the altar, seek him out, and be reconciled to his brother, to the glory of Christ? Would not God be glorified and Southern Baptists be better served?"

Day clarified to BP that his questions were hypothetical and not reflective of firsthand knowledge about interactions between Moore and his critics.

The letter concluded that for Southern Baptists to have a great impact for the Kingdom of God, they "must not be ignorant of the schemes of the enemy to divide us."

"Now is not the time for division but unity," Day wrote, "and we must be diligent to preserve the unity we have in Christ. Perhaps we should all take a step back and consider what would most honor Christ."

"The name of Jesus is too valuable and the preaching of the Gospel to the world too important to do otherwise."

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbc.org.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Macedonia Church, Lee County:** Revival, Mar. 19 - 22; Sun. - Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Rex Yancey, speaker; Don Baggett, pastor; Dexter Griggs, music director.

► **Holly Springs Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming, Mar. 19; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; business meeting, 10:50 a.m., followed by music by Tim Prith & Gospel Echoes; covered dish lunch; all proceeds go to the cemetery fund.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Sean A. Milner, Executive Director
P.O. Box 27
Clinton, MS 39060-0027
(601) 922-2242
www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals want to pay tribute to others through this meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is a helpful reminder to further honor, with love and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

DECEMBER 16-31

MEMORIALS

Mr. Henry Strickland
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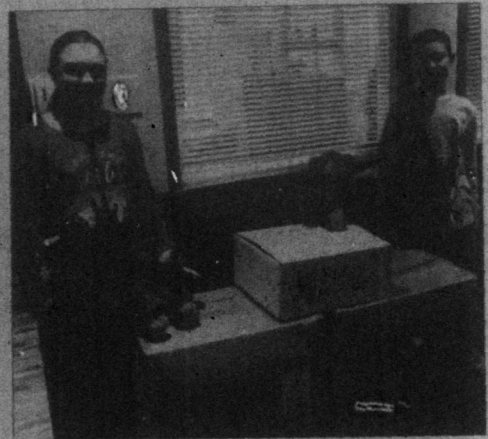
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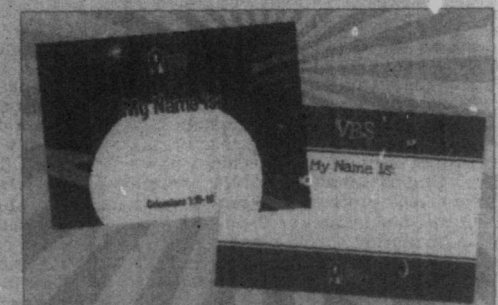
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Lillie and Sam Bradshaw of Morton, MS recently donated Bibles and teddy bears for BCV residents.



Sean A. Milner, BCV Executive Director (right) presents Dr. Greg Beiser, pastor of Morrison Heights Baptist Church in Clinton, MS, a certificate of appreciation which recognizes the church for ranking first on the BCV Honor Roll of Churches for financial gifts to The BCV in 2016.



FREE VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL NAME TAGS

Free Vacation Bible School name tags are available from The Baptist Children's Village. There are two themes. One to compliment the Lifeway theme and one generic design to work with any curriculum. There are also opportunities for BCV speakers to come to your church and for VBS mission projects.

Please go to www.baptistchildrensvillage.com for more information and to order your free name tags.

What Is Required? • Matthew 19:16-26

So far in our lessons we observe Jesus revealing to His disciples who He is: The Messiah, the Son of the living God, and the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. He is about to reveal He is the only way to the kingdom of God.

During the time of Jesus' earthly walk, wealth was seen as proof of God's approval in a person's life and it was commonly taught by the rabbis that rich people were blessed by God and were, therefore, the most likely candidates for heaven. Because of this, wealth was paraded as an honor. This was about to be challenged. Understanding this perspective will help us with today's scripture.

We read that a man came and asked Jesus how to receive eternal life. We don't know his motives. Perhaps he merely wanted confirmation of what he believed was truth. Jesus, however, understood the man's heart and began questioning him about the commands he had followed knowing that the man would answer well. We can almost see the man beaming with pride as he stated he had followed all the laws Jesus mentioned. Perhaps his question of "What do I still lack?" was redundant, for it appeared Jesus would answer, "Nothing!" Jesus, however, revealed *one more thing* and this one more thing pierced the man's heart.

It was the one thing he could not give up. Maybe it was the one thing he relied on for assurance of God's blessing and salvation. Sadly, the man walked away from true salvation because he trusted his tradition and great wealth.

While this scripture has been used to promote poverty as "right living", ironically that would be still depending on the "outward" for salvation. This encounter wasn't about wealth or poverty but about our longing to provide our own salvation. It is about control. It is about the heart and where God reigns in our lives.

Jesus' message was clear—it is impossible for anyone to be saved on his own merits either by good works or supposed blessings from God. Jesus destroyed that notion and along with it, the idea that eternal life can be earned. Looking within the heart, it was clear this man relied on his wealth for everything including salvation. Unless he let go of this belief he

would never be able to enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus recognizes dependence upon anything other than Him blinds us to our true selves. When we are proud of accomplishments and wealth, we are as likely to humble ourselves before God as a camel is to crawl through the eye of a needle. He gave this man a choice but sadly he chose his wealth and his pride over the kingdom of God.

Jesus began to explain another truth to his disciples about Himself and their response to Jesus' statement about

the camel indicated they must have believed the Pharisee's viewpoint of wealth because they asked, "Who then can be saved?" If the wealthy among them, which included the Pharisees and scribes, were unworthy of heaven, what hope was there for them?

Jesus' answer is the foundation of the gospel: "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26 NIV). Men are

saved through God's gifts of grace, mercy, and faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). Nothing we do or own can earn salvation. It comes when we recognize our spiritual poverty and our utter inability to do anything to justify ourselves to a holy God.

What are we depending upon for salvation? No, be honest. If we say we only depend on Christ, a quick check of our thoughts might show something different. If we sit with a list of do's and don'ts and condemn others for breaking one of our "don'ts" we are just as guilty of self-reliance as the man in our story. Yes, we are to follow the commands of God but our salvation does not come from "rule following." Our salvation comes from grace alone in Christ alone. He is the only thing we are to have uppermost in our hearts and minds. We must honestly ask ourselves where our security sits? If it is in good works, we are doomed. If it is in wealth, we are doomed. If it is in intellect, we are doomed. Even if we are proud of our poverty, we are doomed. But if our heart and soul depend upon Christ alone, then ours is the kingdom of God.

Grace is a Bible teacher, conference leader, and member of First Church, Clinton.



Explore the Bible

with Cyndi Grace

Victory Over Sin • Romans 6:4-13

Recently I had the privilege of baptizing a mother and her three teenage daughters. Our church is in the habit of clapping vigorously each time a person follows Christ in baptism, for the body of Christ knows that it's an exciting beginning for this new believer. God has come aboard the lives of these new professing Christians and he will now empower them to live a God-honoring, Christ-centered life.

In the verses before this week, Paul reminds us of the victory each believer has in Christ over sin. Through immersion, as we were dipped under the water, we expressed our desire to no longer live for ourselves but for Jesus. The old life we once lived was buried, done away with, forgotten. As we were brought up out of the waters of baptism it represented our new life in Christ. Paul described this experience in another of his writings: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor 5:17 NIV).

One dynamic of being a new creation in Christ is that God has now given us a different default setting. We no longer want to live for ourselves but for Him. The sin that once turned us on now turns us off. What used to

excite us in the flesh now makes us nauseous. Living for God's pleasure is now our passion.

But just because we are now believers with a desire to please God does not mean we no longer struggle with sin. Even the Apostle Paul wrestled to do the right thing. Listen to his struggle: "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good."

As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing" (Rom 7:15-19 NIV).

But praise be to the Lord, for Paul finished Romans Chapter 7 on an ex-

citing note: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom 7:24-25). Christ has indeed come to the sinner's rescue. What we needed most was a savior and that's exactly who God sent.

Often it seems, however, that we as Christians have the desire to live a life pleasing to God and free from

sin, yet we lack the power to do so. Thus we face the same dilemma the disciples of Jesus faced when trying to stay awake to

pray. Jesus said about them what I believe is often true about us: "... the spirit is willing but the body is weak" (Matt 26:41).

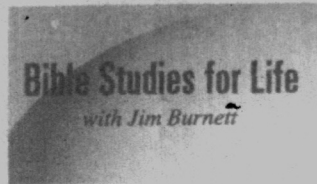
To combat our flesh, we must live under the lordship of Jesus Christ. We must daily bring our thoughts, our desires, our wills, our concerns,

and everything else and put them under Christ's control. We must get into our prayer closets and confess the sin that so easily entangles us. We must constantly read the word of God that is living and active and then align our lives with it. Stand on its promises and live out its principles in the power of the Holy Spirit. Make good godly choices.

Another step we can take to strengthen ourselves in the Lord is invite one or two other believers to walk along with us, encourage us, pray with us, and hold us accountable. When we are living in isolation, we are easy targets of Satan and our flesh. But we are always better together. We are stronger when we are looking out for one another. We all have blind spots in our lives and need those extra pair of eyes of a friend to help us identify our weak areas and to help us when we get stuck.

Jesus has brought us victory over our sin. Now it's incumbent on us to live in that victory which requires surrender and obedience.

Burnett is pastor of Willow Pointe Church, Hattiesburg.



Bible Studies for Life

with Jim Burnett



Disney at it again, pushing perverse themes

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — Themes promoting homosexual, bisexual, and transgender lifestyles are becoming more prevalent in U.S. entertainment venues expressly marketed to children — most notably with Disney's new version of *Beauty and the Beast*.

For example, the retelling of *Beauty and the Beast* debuting in theaters March 17 will include a reimagined LeFou character, who will express a homosexual yet conflicted attraction to the brutish and macho character Gaston, the movie's director Bill Condon told *Attitude*, a homosexual magazine.

Disney has also included a scene with several same-gender couples kissing in the Feb. 27 episode of the children's cartoon *Star vs. the Forces of Evil*, available on the Disney XD network website.

At the Feb. 18-21 New York Toy Fair, Tonner Doll Company unveiled a new doll portraying a boy who perceives himself a girl. The Jazz doll, named after real life, 16-year-old transgender youth Jazz Jennings, will be available in July, CNN has reported. The doll has no specific characteristic that would deem it transgender, but is designed with Jennings' facial features.

The Jazz doll debuted with a pink shirt and denim shorts, the outfit Jennings wears on the cover of the memoir, *Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender) Teen*. The doll is also featured in New York in a sparkling white ballerina dress.

Jennings posted a photo of the doll at Instagram with the descriptor, "The doll is considered to be the first 'transgender' doll because it's based on an individual who is trans. Of course it is still just a regular girl doll because that's exactly what I am: a regular girl!"

Jennings began wearing girls' clothing before the age of five when he declared at his birthday party that he was a girl, his parents have told ABC. Jennings has been featured in interviews with Barbara Walters, Katie Couric, and Oprah Winfrey.

One Million Moms (1MM) in Tupelo, affiliated with the American Family Association also in Tupelo, has pushed back against the LGBT-friendly themes, opening a campaign against Disney with a petition that has already collected over 21,000 signatures a day after its March 1 posting at onemillionmoms.com.

"This is the last place parents would expect their children to be confronted with content regarding sexual orientation. Issues of this nature are being introduced too early and too soon, and it is becoming extremely common and unnecessary," 1MM said in a March 1 press release.

"Disney has decided to be politically correct versus providing family-friendly entertainment. Disney should stick to entertaining instead of pushing an agenda."

The live-action version of *Beauty and the Beast* will include a moment that Condon has described as "exclusively gay."

"LeFou is somebody who on one day wants to be Gaston and on another day wants to kiss Gaston," Condon is quoted as saying by several news outlets including time.com.

"He's confused about what he wants. It's somebody who's just realizing that he has these feelings, and Josh [actor Josh Gad] makes something really subtle and delicious out of it, and that's what has its payoff at the end, which I don't want to give away, but it is a nice, exclusively gay moment in a Disney movie."

Regarding the *Star vs. the Forces of Evil* animated Disney XD cartoon featuring homosexual kisses, 14-year-old princess Star, the title character, is attending a concert at which same sex couples are included in a scene featuring several characters kissing.

"Disney has been under pressure from the gay community to portray openly gay relationships in its TV shows and movies," 1MM said, "and last fall, the creators of [the Disney movie] *Moana* mentioned in an interview... that they wouldn't rule out an LGBT Disney princess. Director Ron Clements said, 'It seems like the possibilities are pretty open at this point.'"

The petition being promoted by 1MM, a 250,000-strong group, states, "I do not agree with the LGBT agenda you are pushing on families and children. You will not have my support as long as you continue to veer away from family-friendly entertainment."



Eight companies repeat on dirtiest list for 2017

NASHVILLE (BP) — The National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE) has released its 2017 Dirty Dozen List of companies most responsible for promoting pornography and sex crimes among adults and children in homes, libraries, hotels, and other places.

Amazon, the American Library Association (ALA), Amnesty International, Backpage.com, *Cosmopolitan* magazine, HBO, Snapchat, and YouTube are repeats on the 2017 list, with the ALA and *Cosmopolitan* making the list the past five consecutive years. Comcast, EBSCO Information Services, Roku, and Twitter are newcomers.

"The disturbing truth is that many well-established brands, companies, and organizations in America are major perpetrators of sexual harm — whether that be through pornography, prostitution, or sex trafficking," NCOSE said in releasing its list Feb. 22. "Now, thanks to The Dirty Dozen List, we can see which well-known entities promote and profit from forms of sexual exploitation."

"Even better, The Dirty Dozen List gives individuals the ability to make a difference."

In addition to the Dirty Dozen, NCOSE compiles a watch



list of organizations that have pledged to make changes. That list includes the U.S. Department of Justice, Hyatt Hotels, and Verizon. NCOSE relied on product websites, federal and state laws, policy statements, news articles, and other communications in compiling its lists, and provides on its website endsexualexploitation.org direct links and resources to advocate for change.

NCOSE accused Amazon of selling "thousands of pornography-related items in numerous categories," including hardcore pornographic films and maga-

zines, books featuring "erotici- zed child nudity," sex dolls, and other items.

While Amazon's corporate policy prohibits the sale of pornography, NCOSE said, the on-line retailer's policies "are contradictory, unclear, and not well enforced, making Amazon the world's leading porn shop."

The ALA is accused of "zealously" encouraging libraries to avoid using Internet filters on public-access computers, which allows patrons including children to access obscene materials. "This has lured the once safe community setting of the public

library into an XXX-space that fosters child sexual abuse, sexual assault, exhibitionism, stalking, and lewd behavior in libraries across the country," NCOSE said.

Amnesty International's documented support of the full decriminalization of prostitution "prioritizes the special interests of pimps (i.e., sex traffickers) and sex buyers over the human rights of people in prostitution," NCOSE said. Legalizing prostitution as "sex work," as Amnesty International advocates to decrease sexual abuse, would lead to "a vibrant and flourishing sex trade" uninhibited by legal barriers.

The Backpage.com classified advertising website "brings the seedy street corners of America's red-light districts to home computers," NCOSE said, and "serves as a virtual auction block where sex buyers can shop for human beings for sex from the privacy of their home, office, hotel room, or cell phone... The website facilitates this activity by editing ads to conceal the illegality of underlying criminal activity."

Dirty Dozen newcomer Twitter "serves as a major platform to disseminate hardcore pornography and facilitate prostitution," NCOSE said. "This site is riddled

with sexually explicit Tweets and images, many of which serve as advertisements for pornography websites or online prostitution."

Comcast profits from sexual exploitation, *Cosmopolitan* is visually hypersexualized, HBO incorporates graphic sex scenes in original programming, and YouTube is a major pornography portal, NCOSE said.

Snapchat allows the dissemination of sexually graphic materials, NCOSE said, while its Snapcash feature facilitates monetary payment for those providing such content.

EPSCO Information Services, which offers online library resources to public and private schools, public libraries, and other entities, provides "easy access to hardcore pornography sites and extremely graphic sexual content," NCOSE said.

Roku, a leading manufacturer of digital media streaming devices, "facilitates access to hardcore pornography through hundreds of downloadable private and hidden channels."

Founded in 1962 as Morality in Media, NCOSE markets itself as "the leading national organization addressing the public health crisis of pornography and exposing the links between all forms of sexual exploitation."